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THE GIFT OF

SAMUEL ABBOTT GREEN, M.D.,

OF BOSTON.

(Class of 1851.)

29 April, 1890.

Cover

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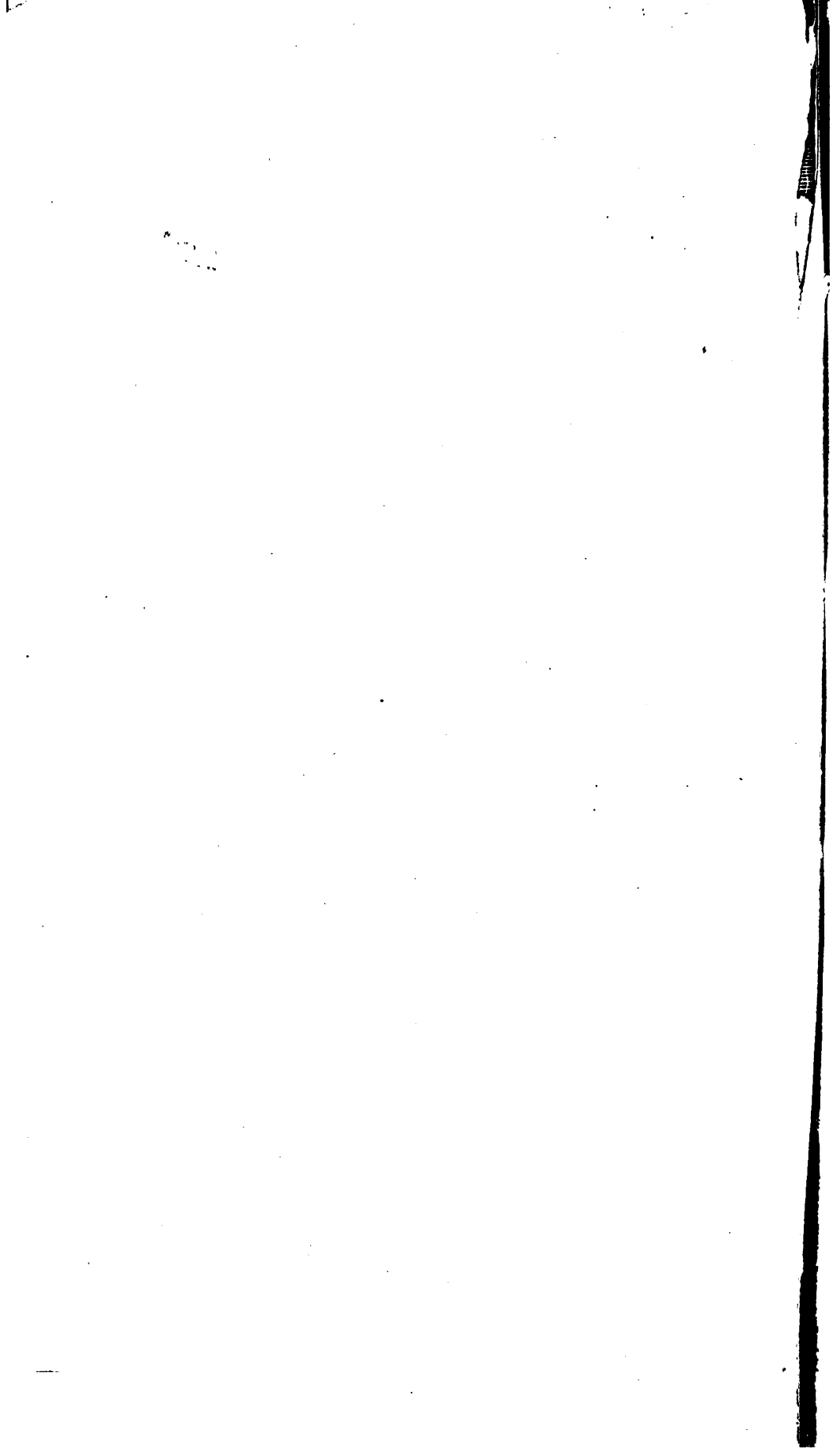
PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

IN THE MATTER OF THE

WINTHROP SWORD.



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WINTHROP SWORD,

AT THE SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING IN BOSTON,

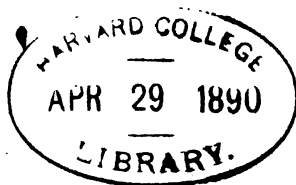
APRIL 25, 1888.

WORCESTER, MASS., U. S. A.

PRESS OF CHARLES HAMILTON,
311 MAIN STREET,
1888.

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Gift of
Dr. S. A. Green

THE WINTHROP SWORD.

IN presenting the sword to the Society, Hon. Hamilton B. Staples spoke as follows :



WINTHROP SWORD,
WITH SCABBARD.

On the 11th of December last, I received a letter from Mr. Thomas L. Winthrop of Boston, grandson of a former President of the Society, the late Hon. Thomas L. Winthrop, in which, through me, a very interesting proposition was made to the Society. I give entire this part of the letter. "Miss Winthrop has much interested me in her account of our family relics in the rooms of the Antiquarian Society, and I have thought it possible that it might be agreeable to the Society to become the depository of yet another which I have held for many years, uncertain where to bestow it. The article in question is a basket-hilted 'Andrea Ferrara,' bearing upon its blade the name and 'punches' of that famous maker and accompanied by the following inscription, in the handwriting of Mr. Robert C. Winthrop: 'Sword of Fitz-John Winthrop, sometime a captain in Monk's army, second in command of the expedition against Canada in 1690, agent for Connecticut in London, 1693-8, and afterward for nine years Gov^r of Connecticut. Born Mch. 14, 1638—died Nov. 27, 1707. Buried in the Kings Chapel graveyard.' This sword, which

is in perfect preservation, I inherited from my father, Grenville Temple Winthrop, who was an older brother of Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, and son of that namesake of my own, who presented various family relics to the Society, the late Hon^{ble} Thomas Lindall Winthrop. Would you sometime at your leisure ascertain if it would be pleasing to the Society to receive the sword."

I immediately laid the proposition before Mr. Salisbury, the President of the Society, and was asked by him to inform Mr. Winthrop that if the American Antiquarian Society should become the custodian of the sword, it would be regarded as a trust to be most carefully guarded and that the sword would have a conspicuous place among our most valued relics. I communicated the President's answer to Mr. Winthrop in a letter, first submitted to Mr. Salisbury for his approval. On March 29, 1888, the sword was forwarded to me accompanied by a letter which clearly explains itself, and should be formally communicated to the Society.

"38 BEACON ST., 28 March, 1888.

MY DEAR JUDGE STAPLES :

Your letter of the 13th February was duly received by me in which you express the willingness of Mr. Stephen Salisbury, on behalf of the American Antiquarian Society, to become the trustee of the sword of Governor Fitz-John Winthrop and to give it a suitable place in the hall of the Society. The acceptance of the trust by the American Antiquarian Society is a high compliment to my family, and assists in confirming my opinion that the sword, although borne by a distinguished Governor of Connecticut, has at least equal claims to interest in the State with which my family was first and most intimately identified. Upon quite different grounds the sword claims the attention of the antiquary of every State and Country, from its being a blade of the most famous sword-maker of the Renaissance, whose name and punches are to be found

upon it. Allow me to thank you for your kind trouble taken in this matter, and believe me, my dear Judge Staples, yours very truly,

THOMAS L. WINTHROP."

In presenting the sword to the Society at this time, I comply with the request of the President in giving a somewhat more extended sketch of the wearer of the sword, and of the sword itself. Fitz-John Winthrop was the son of John Winthrop, the first Governor of Connecticut under the charter, and grandson of John Winthrop, the first Governor of Massachusetts. His father, born at Groton, England, in 1605, educated at the University of Dublin, was a fine scholar and an eminent physician. He died in Boston, April 5, 1676.

Fitz-John Winthrop was born at Ipswich, March 14, 1638. Before attaining his majority he went to England to seek service in the civil war. The time of his arrival there is indicated by a letter from his uncle, Emanuel Downing, at Edinburgh, dated 2d February, 1657, congratulating him upon his safe arrival, and also by a letter from his uncle, Colonel Thomas Reade, Governor of Stirling Castle, dated February 15, 1657, in which young Winthrop is advised to remain in Scotland, and assured of the willingness of Colonel Reade to assist him in obtaining military preferment. The promise was soon fulfilled. In a letter dated December 8, 1658, he is addressed as "Lt: Winthrope at Stirling." In the following February he was at Cardross as Governor of the castle with the same title. In 1660 he was a captain in Colonel Reade's regiment. That he was with General Monk in London shortly before the Restoration is shown by his letter to his brother Wait Winthrop, afterwards Chief Justice, from London, dated May 8, 1660. Returning to New England, at or near the end of 1661, he identified himself with the Connecticut colony, became a representative, served in King Philip's War as Major, and for a time was a member of the Council

of Sir Edmund Andros. In May, 1689, he was chosen one of the magistrates. In 1690 he was appointed Major-General of the land forces in the expedition against Canada. The scheme on the part of New York and the New England colonies was to attack Montreal with nearly a thousand men, assisted by five or six hundred Indians of the Five Nations, who had promised their co-operation; while a fleet and an army of about two thousand men under command of Sir William Phipps, Governor of Massachusetts, were to proceed up the St. Lawrence and attack Quebec. It was supposed that the result of the combined attack would be the capture of one or both of these strongholds. Captain Leisler had then assumed the government at Albany, and Milborn, his son-in-law, was appointed Commissary. It had been agreed that New York should furnish a certain number of troops for the expedition, also the provisions and means of transportation for the army. The fleet sailed for Quebec with thirty or forty vessels, but did not arrive till October 5, a much later time than was anticipated. When Winthrop's army had arrived at Wood Creek, the place appointed for meeting the Indians, less than a hundred Indians were present, the rest refusing or evading the requisition, and the New York contingent had not appeared. The army continued to advance a hundred miles further to the lake where means of transportation were required. The Commissary had failed to provide the requisite means or a supply of provisions for the army. After a council of war, a retreat to Albany became necessary for the subsistence of the army. This retreat and the late arrival of the fleet defeated the expedition. General Winthrop returned to Connecticut after serious difficulties with the Governor at Albany, the latter betraying a purpose to fix upon another the responsibility for the retreat, which clearly attached to him or his subordinate.

The General Assembly voted that the conduct of General Winthrop "had been with good fidelity to his Majesty's

interest," and thanked him "for his good services." In 1692 Colonel Benjamin Fletcher, Governor of New York, had received a commission from the King vesting him with full power to command the entire militia of Connecticut and of the neighboring provinces. As the right to command the militia was expressly given to the colony by the charter, the Legislature refused to submit to the regulation. At this time occurred the amusing episode of Captain Wadsworth preventing by the noise of drums the reading of Fletcher's commission before the train bands of Hartford. In 1693 the Assembly petitioned King William the Third on the subject, and appointed General Winthrop as their agent to present the petition to the King and use his best efforts to maintain the chartered rights of the Colony. This was rightly regarded as a vital question upon which the right of local government depended. So ably and yet so wisely did General Winthrop perform the duty assigned him that on April 19, 1694, the King decided the question in favor of the Colony. Trumbull's History relates that in January, 1698, Major-General Fitz-John Winthrop, having returned from his successful agency at the Court of Great Britain, was received with great enthusiasm and was thanked by the Legislature for "his public services." In May, 1698, he was chosen Governor, an office which he continued to fill till his death, November 27, 1707. Trumbull speaks of him as one in whose death the Colony "sustained a great loss." He had long resided at New London, where he had a very large estate, and displayed great hospitality, in marked contrast with his narrow circumstances at the close of his military life in England. Governor Winthrop rendered a great service in advance to the cause of the American Revolution. Organized resistance to the British Crown would have proved well nigh impossible in 1775 and 1776, if the colonies had not commanded the militia agreeably to the precedent of 1694.

Coming now to the sword itself, it is largely a matter of inference where it has been and in what scenes it has borne

a part. It is, however, almost certain that it was obtained and worn by Winthrop when an officer in Monk's army. The Ferara blades were at that time in general use in the Army of the Commonwealth. There is the authority of an article in Macmillan's Magazine on the "Form and History of the Sword" for the statement that Cromwell wore this kind of sword. In the frontispiece to the Leviathan, published in 1650, in the right hand of the mystical figure representing the might of the State, a Ferara sword is held, but without the basket-hilt. In the article upon the "Sword" in the new Encyclopedia Britannica the well known name of Ferara is said to be peculiarly associated with Scottish blades. This sword was the natural weapon for an officer of Monk's army to possess. It is not at all likely that it was procured for the expedition to Canada in 1690, as at that time this kind of sword was passing out of use. The sword was probably worn in the march of Monk's army from Scotland to London, which resulted in the Restoration. It may have been drawn from its scabbard to salute Charles the Second, as in his triumphal progress from Dover to London he passed through the army at Blackheath.

The history of the sword considered as a work of art brings us to a controversy which has engaged the attention of the antiquary for more than half a century. The sword has doubtless existed in a variety of forms. The curved guards, known as *pas d'âne*, the cross-pieces in the plane of the blade called *guillons*, were the simple elements from which was evolved the basket-hilt, elaborate in form and design. Three views have been advanced as to the origin of this celebrated weapon and the age and country of Andrea Ferara. One view is, that he visited Scotland and manufactured his blades there for Scottish use. This theory derived its support from the number of Ferara blades extant in that kingdom early in the reign of James the Sixth. I find several allusions to this sword in the Waverley novels, which imply a use so familiar as to have

given rise to a species of metonymy in the common dialect of the people. In the *Fortunes of Nigel*, Richie threatens "the swaggering billies" with "a slash of my Andrew Ferara." In the same novel Lord Dalgarno tells his father that "more land is won by the lawyer with the ram skin than by the Andrew Ferara with his sheep's-head handle." In the *Bride of Lammermoor*, the sexton in describing the battle of Bothwell Bridge, in 1679, says, "there was auld Ravenswood brandishing his Andrew Ferrara at the head." In *Woodstock*, Wildrake pictures himself as saying to Alice Lee in behalf of his friend Colonel Everard, "give him a good Toledo by his side with a broidered belt and an inlaid hilt, instead of the ton of iron contained in that basket-hilted, black Andrew Ferrara." The last quotation throws some light on the character of the weapon worn by the officers of the Army of the Commonwealth. This theory of a Scottish origin conceived of the name Ferara¹ not as a family name, but as derived from the Latin *Ferrarius*, pertaining to iron, and as denoting the name of a guild of armourers. So that the name *Andrea dei Ferari* as applied to the celebrated sword-maker should be translated, not as Andrew of the Feraras, but as Andrew of the Forge,—one of a guild of armourers in the records of the Scotch burghs under the title of *Hammermen*. Sir Walter Scott in the *Notes to Waverley* appears to favor this view. "Who this artist was, what were his fortunes, and when he flourished, have hitherto defied the research of antiquaries; only it is in general believed that *Andrea de Ferrara* was a Spanish or Italian artificer brought over by James the IV. or V. to instruct the Scots in the manufacture of sword-blades."

¹ The name is not uniformly spelled. In Meyrick's "Critical Inquiry into Ancient Armour," second ed., p. 6, is a long note in which the family name is spelled, "Ferera," "Farara," and "Ferara." In a volume of Illustrations accompanying this work, by Skelton, at No. CIII., a sword of this workman is displayed inscribed on the blade "Ferara." In the citations above, from Scott and others, the spelling is allowed to stand as given by those writers. On the sword now given to the Society the name is spelled FARARA.—COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

The second view attributes to the sword a Spanish origin. In the north of Spain, in the Corunna district, is the town of Fereira. And the claim is that this was the seat of the celebrated manufacture. In the infancy of metallurgical science it was believed that sword-blades acquired the best temper by immersion in mountain streams, and the town in question was the only one of this name which answered the supposed condition.

The third view is, that the sword is an Italian weapon. The evidence in its support may be briefly stated. In the new Encyclopedia Britannica under the article, the Sword, there is a pictorial representation of typical European swords. That which in every particular corresponds with the sword now to be presented is classified as Italian, late in the sixteenth century.

From the article in Macmillan, already referred to, I quote the following passage: "A still greater reputation was gained by the strong and keen broadswords bearing the name of Andrea Ferara, long a puzzle to antiquaries as to whether he was of Spanish or Italian origin. Evidence exists that sometime after 1580, two brothers, Giovan Donato and Andrea dei Ferari, were well known sword makers working at Bellune in Friuli, the Illyrian territory of Venice." The strongest authority is Cigogna. In the *Trattato Militare*, Venetia, 1583, he confines his enumeration of sword manufacturers "to the most excellent armourers of Italy," to whom he gives the pre-eminence in this art. He further says, that "in the town of Bellune are the ingenious masters, Giovan Donato and Andrea of the Ferraras, both brothers." It is further stated that there were others of the same name, sword makers in that country, as shown by dei Ferrari, of the Ferraras, indicating an established family originating in the ducal city of that name. The half-length figures on the blade wear on their heads the crown known as the Eastern or Antique crown, a device which implies an Italian rather than a more Western origin.

Finally the opinion of the accomplished donor of the sword, in part based on family tradition, favoring the Italian view, is entitled to be considered in deciding this question. It seems very clear that the evidence preponderates in favor of the Italian view. It is to be hoped that the possession of the sword by the Society may lead to a more exhaustive study of its origin and mode of manufacture than can now be attempted.

Nothing remains but to present the sword through you, Mr. President, to the Society, and to congratulate it on the acquisition of an additional relic of a family long and most honorably identified with the Society, and of a work of art of interest alike to the historian and the antiquary. The sash of choicest silk, its hues mellowed and enriched by time, is presented with the sword.

The President said: The American Antiquarian Society accepts with satisfaction the trust confided to it by Mr. Thomas L. Winthrop, and is happy to recognize the peculiar fitness of the halls of the Society for a depository of so treasured a relic as the sword worn by the great-great uncle of our former President, the Hon. Thomas L. Winthrop.

Rev. Edward E. Hale, D.D., said: I am sure that I represent the wish of the whole Society, when I propose a vote of thanks to Colonel Winthrop for the valuable and interesting gift which he makes to the Society. It is indeed grateful to the Society at any time to renew the recollections of the close connections of the honored family of Winthrop with the history of the country, since that history began. We are so fortunate as to possess in our own hall the original portrait of John Winthrop, which has been ascribed to the pencil of Vandyke, as well as that very curious "loving-cup," with its memories of many generations, which has been already alluded to. It is needless to refer to the name of Governor John Winthrop, the first historian of

New England, who recorded for us, day by day, the history of the great movement, the whole of which he saw, and of which he was so large a part. To his son John, the Governor of Connecticut, we owe that body of correspondence, which I think the gentlemen around me would say is the most valuable store-house we have for information on the habits, the events, the social order, and the tone of feeling, of the generations after the first settlement, up to his death. His son, Fitz-John, entered—one almost says, of course—into the service of the country, and served it in such ways as have been traced by Judge Staples. John Winthrop, his nephew, in his own selected line of life rendered public services no less important. He was a graduate of Harvard College, and a fellow of the Royal Society. The fondness for science has shown itself, indeed, in all the Winthrops, from the beginning to this hour. The other John Winthrop, who was also a fellow of the Royal Society, and professor in Harvard College, was the friend and correspondent of Franklin. In the study of the Franklin correspondence lately, I have been greatly interested in seeing how close were his relations with Franklin, and how accurate were his observations in natural science. The dramatic story of the first occultation ever observed of the planet of Venus by young Horrocks in England, has always connected the return of that interesting phenomenon with his name. It is not, perhaps, so generally remembered that to Professor John Winthrop, above referred to, the world of science owes the second observation of that transit, which was made by Winthrop successfully, with a party from Harvard College whom he took to Newfoundland for that purpose. To our President, for many successive years Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts, in those good days when Massachusetts kept a good officer when she had found him, this Society owes much. It still possesses, as memorials of such obligation, the interesting objects which have been alluded to. We may add that we owe to him, as well, his share of our

gratitude for the distinguished services of his son, who has served the State in a thousand ways, and who was so long the honored President of our sister society. Colonel Winthrop now renews all these remembrances by this gift of a sword which had been used in the service of the short-lived Commonwealth of England, and was destined to be used in the service of those other Commonwealths of New England, which have so long survived their mother. A sword which hung at its owner's side when he asserted that essential principle of New England history,—that the armies of New England are to be directed by the Governors of New England, and not by the English crown,—is certainly one of the most interesting memorials of that history. The Society is glad to associate it with the memory of the Governor who founded Massachusetts, of the two Governors who maintained in Connecticut the liberties and privileges which Connecticut had received at her birth, of the men of science and of letters who have done so much for the nobler life, not of New England only, but of America, and of these distinguished gentlemen who still live, to leave to those who come after us new reasons for honoring the name of Winthrop. I move that the thanks of the Society be presented to Colonel Winthrop for his priceless gift.

The motion of Dr. Hale was unanimously adopted.

